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RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 2879
RUESLM/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1789
RUESNA/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2178
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~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ BOGOTA 00939

Rep Solarz

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SENATOR STONE

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, XK, CI, PE, AR, CO
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BETANCUR ON CENTRAL AMERICA, CHILE, PERU AND ARGENTINA

REF: (A) BOGOTA 00744
(B) BOGOTA 00663
(C) BOGOTA 00719

1. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. FOLLOWING ARE PRESIDENT BETANCUR'S REMARKS TO CODEL SOLARZ IN THE COURSE OF AN HOUR-AND-A-HALF MEETING ON JANUARY 18.

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16. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ SAID HE'D JUST BEEN IN ARGENTINA. THE "DIRTY WAR" THERE WAS CLEARLY IMMORAL AND UNJUSTIFIED, BUT WHAT DOES A COUNTRY DO TO PROTECT ITSELF AGAINST MASSIVE GUERRILLA TERRORISM, HE QUERIED. BETANCUR REPLIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO WILL ON THE PART OF THE ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES TO CORRECT ABUSES. THEY HAD NO THOUGHT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY. THERE WAS NO JUSTICE. THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN "AN ABSOLUTIST SYSTEM ENMESHED IN ITS OWN AUTHORITARIAN IDOLATRY" WHICH WAS UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE COUNTRY'S SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

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17. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ ASKED AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S BROTHER JAIME BETANCUR, KIDNAPPED BY TERRORISTS IN BOGOTA IN NOVEMBER 1983. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT ALTHOUGH UNHARMED PHYSICALLY, HIS BROTHER HAD BEEN CHAINED AND A MACHINE GUN HELD AGAINST HIS HEAD. AS A RESULT, HE SUFFERED PSYCHOLOGICALLY, AND HAS STILL NOT RECOVERED.
WATSON

END OF MESSAGE CONFIDENTIAL

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